

Main Suspect In Casino Robbery Arrested Near LAX

San Jacinto, California – A man suspected of masterminding the USD 1.5 million Soboba Indian Casino robbery was arrested over the weekend near Los Angeles International Airport, authorities said Monday.

Rolando Luda Ramos, 25, was booked into the Southwest Detention Center Saturday on suspicion of strong armed robbery, false imprisonment, battery with injury and kidnapping.

According to the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, Ramos was picked up at a hotel near LAX at 3 a.m. Saturday.

Ramos was being held without bail, pending arraignment Wednesday, according to sheriff's jail records.

Authorities have recovered about USD 1.3 million of the stolen money, sheriff's Sgt. Dennis Gutierrez said.

The Sheriff's Department, Fontana and Ontario police, the Riverside County District Attorney's Office and the state Attorney's General's Office were all involved in the investigation, sheriff's Sgt. Dennis Gutierrez said.

The investigation also was aided by the special investigations unit of the state Department of Justice, Gutierrez said.

Ramos' alleged accomplice and getaway driver, Eric Alan Magdaleno Aguilera, 23, of Hemet, was arrested Friday after a search of his apartment allegedly turned up USD 500,000 of the stolen cash, authorities said.

He was booked into the Larry D. Smith Correctional Facility on suspicion of kidnapping, robbery in concert, false imprisonment and battery with injury, according to county jail

records.

He was in custody in lieu of USD 250,000 bail, pending arraignment Tuesday, according to jail records.

Aguilera allegedly drove the black Ford Mustang that was used in Thursday's heist and belonged to Ramos, Assistant Sheriff Pat McManus said.

„We believe he was in the car the whole time,“ McManus said. „The information we received indicates he dropped Ramos off (at the casino) and drove around in circles in the neighborhood until he got the signal to come back.“

McManus said Aguilera was identified as a suspect during interviews Thursday with Ramos' friends, relatives and co-workers.

„During the interview process, he (Aguilera) made some admissions that led to his arrest,“ McManus said.

Investigators believe Ramos and Aguilera divided the USD 1.5 million taken during the casino robbery and then went their separate ways, he said.

Ramos, who worked at the casino for two years as a technician on its video surveillance systems, allegedly disabled several security cameras before pulling off the heist.

The suspect had an unarmed security guard and a security guard trainee escort him into the casino vault before daybreak on the pretense of working on equipment, according to sheriff's investigators.

Once inside the vault, he allegedly brandished a handgun and threatened several employees before bagging the cash, according to McManus.

Sheriff's deputies called to the casino at 23333 Soboba Road about 5:15 a.m. had to force their way into two vaults,

McManus said.

One of the vaults had three people inside who had been bound and gagged with tape, he said, including one victim who had been pepper-sprayed.

Seven others in a second vault had been told to sit quietly on the floor while the suspect took the cash, McManus said.

„They were all pretty shaken up, but otherwise okay,“ he said.

Last December, Ramos pleaded guilty to driving under the influence and was sentenced to 36 months probation, which he was still serving, according to court records.